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21 is the end of the shaft that is in fluid communication with the tire assembly (see Figure 3). Further, as explained in prior responses, the seals of Stech do not cooperate with a first end of a wheel shaft as defined in claim 1.

Claim 10 recites that the input comprises an axle shaft defining an axle shaft axis of rotation that is parallel to and spaced apart from the wheel axis, which is defined by the wheel shaft. Stech does not disclose this feature. Stech discloses an axle shaft 12 that defines an axis of rotation for the wheel. The wheel axis of rotation and the axle shaft axis of rotation are the same axis, i.e. the wheel and axle shaft axes of rotation are co-axial, and thus are not parallel to and spaced apart from each other. Thus, claim 10 is not anticipated by Stech. For similar reasons claim 16 is allowable over Stech.

Further, the examiner has not provided arguments indicating where the features of claims 10 and 16 are disclosed in Stech. If the examiner continues to uphold this rejection, applicant respectfully requests that the examiner provide an indication of where the features of claims 10 and 16 are found in Stech.

Claim 17 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Stech in view of Hertel (US 3405952). For the reasons set forth above, Stech does not disclose, suggest, or teach the claimed invention. Hertel does not make up for the deficiencies of Stech. Further, the examiner argues that it would be obvious to modify Stech to have a wheel axis vertically higher than the axle shaft axis to provide a lower center of gravity. Applicant respectfully asserts that there is no motivation or suggestion to modify Stech in the manner proposed by the examiner.

There is nothing in the references to support the suggestion that lowering a center of gravity would be beneficial for the axle configuration of Stech. Stech is equally likely to need a higher ground clearance as to needing to lower a center of gravity. Further, modifying Stech to include an axle shaft, wheel shaft, and idler gears would significantly change the entire drive configuration, and would add a significant number of components, resulting in increased costs. The examiner has pointed to no teaching in Hertel of any particular benefit derived from lowering the center of gravity for a vehicle configuration such as that of Stech. In addition, there

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is nothing in Stech that would have led one of ordinary skill in the art to believe that Stech's wheel drive configuration was in any way deficient for Stech's purposes or was in need of modification.

Further, none of the recited references disclose forming first and second wheel shafts with an internally formed fluid passages as defined in claims 16 and 17. Stech discloses forming a fluid passage in an axle shaft and does not include a wheel shaft as defined in the claims. Hertel discloses an axle shaft that is offset from a wheel shaft, but does not disclose any type of fluid passage being formed in the wheel shaft or axle shaft. The only teaching of forming a fluid passage in a wheel shaft as defined in claims 16 and 17 is in the present application. One of ordinary skill in the art would have found no reason, suggestion, or incentive for attempting to combine these references so as to arrive at the subject matter of claim 17 other than through the luxury of hindsight accorded one who first viewed applicant's disclosure.

Claim 18 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Stech in view of Hauser (US 6122996). For the reasons set forth above, Stech does not disclose, suggest, or teach the claimed invention. Hauser does not make up for the deficiencies of Stech. Further, for reasons similar to those set forth above with regard to the Stech and Hertel combination, there is no motivation or suggestion to modify Stech with the teachings of Hauser.

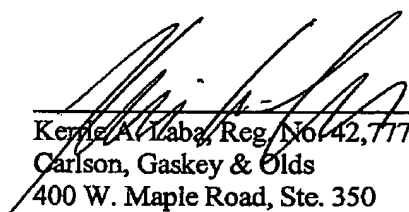
Claims 21 and 22 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Stech in view of Schultz (US 4883106). For the reasons set forth above, Stech does not disclose, suggest, or teach the claimed invention. Schultz does not make up for the deficiencies of Stech. Further, the seals 34 identified in Schultz are shown at a second end of the bore as defined in claim 1, not the first end. Thus, there is no disclosure in any of the recited references of a seal assembly that cooperates with a first end of a bore that is in fluid communication with an air source as defined in the claims.

Applicant asserts that all claims are in condition for allowance and respectfully requests an indication of such. Applicant believes that no additional fees are necessary; however, the

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Commissioner is authorized to charge Deposit Account No. 50-1482 in the name of Carlson, Gaskey & Olds for any additional fees or credit the account for any overpayment.

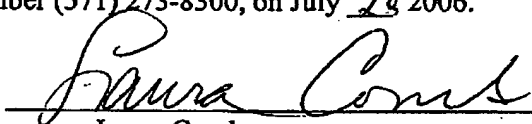
Respectfully submitted,


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CERTIFICATE OF TRANSMISSION UNDER 37 CFR 1.8

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being facsimile transmitted to the United States patent and Trademark Office, fax number (571) 273-8300, on July 24 2006.


Laura Combs